

# THE ASSOCIATIONS' PAGE

## Commonwealth Police Officers' Association Federal Police Association

### EARLY RETIREMENT

While the Associations are yet to resolve their differences, many other issues of vital importance to members are being pursued. The question of early retirement at 55 years is a high priority, especially now that our colleagues in some State Police Forces are having a measure of success. The present system of superannuation is dependent upon the Commonwealth Superannuation Act which is based on the retirement age of 65 years. Although members subscribe to this superannuation scheme we have already been subjected to compulsory retirement at age 60 thereby depriving members from obtaining full pension rights. This, of course, does not apply to the Commissioner or his Deputy who have the option of continuing their service until the age of 65 years.

The birth of a new police force affords an opportunity unprecedented in which we can review the present retirement benefits. We were successful as an Association in persuading the legislators to include in the AFP Act provisions for early retirement at the age of 55 years. At the present time a interdepartmental committee has been charged with the responsibility of undertaking a review to provide retirement benefits for members of the AFP. There would be clearly no advantage of providing a system of retirement which does not encourage members to take advantage of it unless it provides a proper and adequate monetary compensation. To entice a person to retire at 55 the Government must provide full pension facilities. This would then ensure a steady turnover of members which would in turn provide more opportunity for advancement within the AFP and the Government would be rewarded with a more efficient and effective organisation.

There are those who consider that the AFP should have its own superannuation scheme which is completely divorced from other Government instrumentalities. There are strong arguments to support the proposition that the police profession should not be aligned with that of the Public Service and its conditions of employment. If we are to support that argument then the Government should provide as a matter of urgency a superannuation system which is set apart and totally confined and for the benefit of all members of the Australian Federal Police. In my view the Associations have a vital role to play in furthering the interests of its members to ensure that the best possible terms are obtained so that members may retire at the age of 55 on full pension benefits.

Alan K. Bilbie  
Secretary

### MERGER PROBLEMS

On 28 February 1980 the Commonwealth Police Officers' Association, Federal Executive, attended a general meeting of the Federal Police Association in Canberra where your executive officers discussed with the FPA the prospect of merging both associations. There it was decided by the FPA that a merger would not take place at that time.

On 21 March 1980 your Federal Executive met executive members of the FPA in Canberra. The AFP Commissioner, Sir Colin Woods, was present only during some of the discussions because of other commitments, however, minutes of the meeting have been made available. The meeting analysed problems associated with "getting" the two police associations together. We said the CPOA supported a merger and were ready to merge at any time. Unfortunately, the problem was not as easy for the FPA.

Harking back to 29 February, the morning after the general meeting, the Canberra Times reported that the FPA had decided not to merge at that stage, the two main reasons being that the CPOA did not support a two-component force and secondly that the CPOA did not support the principle of two separate wage structures. It was also reported that the FPA would recruit CPOA members. I don't wish to comment on the third matter except to say the poaching of members from one association to another is most unethical and, in this case, is setting a double standard of membership, particularly in view of the second point of contention where the FPA would be seeking two pay scales, presumably one for Protective Services and one for the General Police component.

Referring to the first point I stress that our association has never supported a two-component system. The reasons for this are well known to the FPA Executive. Secondly, we believe no member of our association is in any way inferior to other members of the AFP, therefore we supported a single pay scale. However, we have always recognised that if additional skills and expertise are required, these should be compensated by appropriate allowances for which we are now making provision. Both of these points were well publicised before the meeting on 28 February.

At the meeting in Sir Colin Woods' office on 21 March another reason suggested for the merger failing was that the CPOA Federal Executive failed to sell the idea of merging to FPA members. I think it is fair to point out that at that stage we had sold the idea CPOA members and surely it was the job of the FPA Executive to sell the benefits of the merger to their members.

A further reason which was suggested at the meeting was that members of the FPA had no confidence in the Federal Executive of the CPOA, in particular the president and myself. This was not reported in the Canberra Times article on 29 February. On the basis of this objection the president and myself said if we were the only antagonists standing in the way of a successful merger we would be prepared to stand down from our positions. This was on the condition that a vote be conducted among members of the FPA seeking their views in the matter, then if they were prepared to merge we would resign. This was not pursued by the FPA.

What concerns our association is that the real reasons for the two associations' failure to merge are not being portrayed by representatives of the FPA. Our association, to say the least, is disappointed a

merger is not taking place and is very confused by the inconsistency of the FPA policies, not only in relation to the merger, but also in respect of terms and conditions of employment. Our association has just completed and submitted a "log of claims" to the AFP Arbitral Tribunal. We have spent a lot of time comparing with former police forces' determinations and looking at conditions which may benefit all AFP members. We are disappointed the FPA saw fit to submit their current terms and conditions of service for ratification by the AFP Arbitral Tribunal. Their terms and conditions have already been guaranteed by the AFP Act. The result of their action is simply this — it could present an impediment in the representations and negotiations before the tribunal.

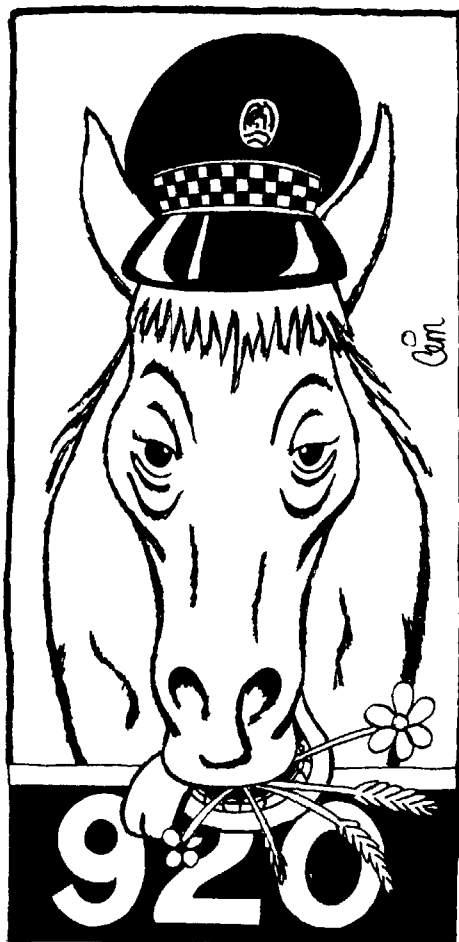
I am pleased to say we have approached this matter with a completely broad concept in mind. Our association is prepared to put before the tribunal

arguments to maintain the best from both awards. Our association also believes that if the Australian Government wants to establish a first class police force, there should be no squabbling over whether we should have the best terms and conditions of any police force in Australia.

As I said in the previous issue of Platypus, we have a unique opportunity of bringing together two police organisations to make the resulting organisation the best possible. This is more important now than ever before. If this does not happen members of the AFP will suffer. Whatever happens, we intend soon to meet members of the AFP in Canberra to explain in detail what our claim means to them and to seek their support.

Yours faithfully,  
P.N. CURTIN

# This hack really puts the wind up 'em!



In his relentless pursuit of scandal the Canberra Times Gang Gang columnist has unearthed yet another skeleton in the closet. With that newspaper's permission we reprint the recently published saga of Fernmount Police Troop Horse No 920.

Art Work by Jim Liston.

The following — we understand genuine — document was leaked to The Canberra Times recently by one of Gang Gang's impeccable police sources.

Police Station, GLENREAGH.  
10th September, 1931.

I have to report that prior to being sent to the Grafton Police paddock, Troop Horse No 920 was attached to this Station for a period of about 12 months.

This horse is not such a good remount as his appearance would at first suggest, but apart from a few little deficiencies mentioned hereunder, he is fairly safe to ride.

The horse is not a very good hack as he is somewhat rough to ride, and in my opinion, it would be dangerous to carry a loaded firearm whilst riding him, as the jolting would be almost sure to explode my loaded weapon. If anyways fresh, this horse will buck and, if unsuccessful in unseating his rider, he will throw himself down and it is advisable to run him in a small paddock, as he is very hard to catch in a roomy enclosure. When cornered, he will strike and kick, and rear and gallop over anyone who endeavours to stop him, and when caught, he is knocked up and of no further use for the day.

Troop Horse No 920 fell whilst I was walking and leading him from the paddock to the Police Station and injured his front offside leg and skinned his face. He falls about three times per mile whilst being ridden, and it is advisable to walk and lead this horse when travelling downhill. He also falls when going uphill, but does not come over in such a dangerous manner as when travelling on a decline.

The horse also has a nasty habit of sticking up when being ridden through the town, and if any endeavour is made to force him, he will run backwards, kicking up and at the same time loudly and extensively breaking wind. This performance usually draws a crowd, hoodlum and all the stray dogs in the vicinity attend, and it is most embarrassing to the Constable, particularly if there are any ladies present, and on these occasions, it is advisable to dismount and lead the remount until well out of town.

Although Troop Horse 920 never shows much outward condition, he is a very good eater and is no trouble to manage when not being worked.

I have never known this horse to fall whilst at the halt. As a matter of fact, I don't think the horse does fall whilst stationary and apart from the few little deficiencies mentioned above, he is safe to ride, and after two or three years use by Constable White, he should become used to the horse and have very little or no trouble in turning him into a fairly useful remount. The horse is moonblind and has a touch of stringhalt, and with the exception of a few scars on the legs and body from falling on the metal, he leaves this Station poor but sound.

Constable Freebody